

REED HALL
(Roberta Reed Dickson Crenshaw House)
3200 Bowman Avenue
Austin
Travis County
Texas

HABS TX-3534
TX-3534

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
INTERMOUNTAIN REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
12795 West Alameda Parkway
Denver, CO 80228

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

REED HALL (Roberta Reed Dickson Crenshaw House)

HABS No. TX-3534

Location: 3200 Bowman Avenue, Austin, Travis County, Texas. U.S. Geological Survey map, Austin Quadrangle. UTM coordinates: Zone 14N, 3,352,624.265 (northing), 618,225.289 (easting).

Present Owner: Richard J. and Anne M. Smalling, Austin, Texas.

Present Use: Reed Hall was demolished in October 2007 and a new dwelling will be constructed on the property.

Significance: The Reed Hall was a prominent example of Tudor Revival estate design in Austin, Texas, and the primary residence of Roberta Reed Dickson Crenshaw (1914–2005), a local philanthropist.

Historians: Stephanie Katauskas, Summer Chandler, and Amy E. Dase Prewitt and Associates, Inc.

PART I: Historical Information

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: The 1936–1937 house has a ca. 1950 wing addition, and 1980s renovations. Much of the landscaping dates to the late 1930s.
2. Architect: David C. Baer and William “Bill” E. Bergman of Houston, Texas.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners:
 - a. June 18, 1929 – The Monte Vista Real Estate Company, a private corporation, subdivided 77.16 acres out of the Daniel Gilbert Survey in Travis County into seven blocks (A–G) named the Monte Vista Addition.¹
 - b. July 8, 1933 – The Monte Vista Real Estate Company sold all of lots 8–12 and 19–22 of Block D, Monte Vista Addition, to J. T. Bowman.²
 - c. October 21, 1936 – J. T. Bowman sold lots 8–12 and 19–22 of Block D,

¹ Travis County Deed Records, Vol. 3, p. 121 (Austin: Travis County Clerk, 1929).

² Travis County Deed Records, Vol. 496, p. 280 (Austin: Travis County Clerk, 1933).

Monte Vista Addition, to Malcolm H. Reed.³

- d. March 10, 1955 – Roberta Reed Dickson, of Dickson Properties, Inc., sold three lots from the west side of the property. Conveyance of these lots reduced the size of the property to 8.292 acres, which included lots 8–10, 20, and 21 of Block D; certain portions of lots 4–6, 11, 19, and 22; certain portions of former public roads known as Apache Trail and Navajo Drive; and certain portions of lot 30 of Block E.⁴
 - e. September 5, 1980 – Roberta Reed Dickson Crenshaw sold the 8.292-acre property to Jack R. and Joanne Crosby of Reed Hall Joint Venture.⁵
 - f. The property boundaries were carefully surveyed in the early twenty-first century and concluded to contain 6.93 acres.⁶
 - g. August 1, 2006 – Jack R. and Joanne Crosby conveyed the 6.93-acre tract and its improvements to Richard J. and Anne M. Smalling.⁷
4. Builder: Unknown.
5. Original Plans and Construction: Reed Hall originally followed an asymmetrical plan. The mostly rectangular, two-story main block of the house had a one-story wing projecting from its southwest corner. The first floor of the main block was public space with a dining room, foyer, study, kitchen, and a two-story-tall living room. Private areas of the house were the second-floor bedrooms, bathrooms, and balcony overlooking the two-story-tall living room, and the southwest wing's bedroom and bathroom.
6. Alterations and Additions: The house underwent several major changes after initial construction. The ca. 1950 construction of an east wing incorporating a larger kitchen, a first-floor den, and a second stairwell to the second story, concealed a 1940s east wing addition. In the 1980s, two rectangular bays with French doors to the family and breakfast rooms were added to the north side. A hexagonal bay with stained-glass windows on the second floor were added to the south side. Interior changes were so extensive that only the living room was unaffected. On the first floor, new cabinetry was introduced to the guest bedroom, family room, bar, and kitchen. The guest bathroom and second stairwell were remodeled. Decorative molding appointed the breakfast room,

³ Travis County Deed Records, Vol. 549, p. 493 (Austin: Travis County Clerk, 1936).

⁴ Travis County Deed Records, Vol. 7, p. 59 (Austin: Travis County Clerk, 1955).

⁵ Travis County Deed Records, Vol. 9, 122, p. 424 (Austin: Travis County Clerk, 1980).

⁶ Travis County Deed Records, Instrument No. 2006151512 (Austin: Travis County Clerk, 2003, 2004, 2005).

⁷ Travis County Deed Records, Instrument Nos. 2002096587, 2006151512 (Austin: Travis County Clerk, 2006).

family room, study, and guest room, and decorative columns were added to the family room. The second floor plan reallocated existing bedroom and closet space, and additional closets and two bathrooms were installed.

B. Historical Context:

Roberta (*née* Purvis) Reed Dickson Crenshaw was a colorful Austin activist. Champion of civic pride and advocate for preserving Austin's unique character, she exercised her influence to improve the local quality of life. As a philanthropist and environmentalist, she was the motivating force behind lasting local projects such as Lady Bird Lake, formerly known as Town Lake, and the greenbelt and sculpture garden at Zilker Park. She and her husband, Malcolm Reed, had Reed Hall built in 1936–1937, and it remained her home for 44 years. The Austin Chapter of the American Institute of Architecture recognized the house for its design, which was a fine example of a Tudor Revival estate. Moreover, the house was a local civic and social center where many state and national figures gathered for political and philanthropic events.

The first important man in her life was Malcolm Hiram Reed. He was born in northwestern Williamson County, Texas, in 1876, to Thomas Seldon and Dora Connell Reed. Reed's father came to Texas from Arkansas in 1852, and owned a wholesale grocery business. His mother was a native Texan, descended from a prominent and established pioneer family.⁸ Malcolm Hiram Reed attended Hill's Business College in Waco, and his parents sent him to Marble Falls to market goods in 1893. He remained in business there in a variety of capacities, including selling dry goods and timber, for 15 years.⁹ He married Margaret Badger in 1898 and they had four children. Reed organized and served as president of the Marble Falls State Bank before moving his family to Austin in 1908. In 1925, the Reeds built a grand estate on Harris Boulevard in the Enfield subdivision.¹⁰

Reed became a successful businessman. M. H. Reed and Company was a leading cotton factor in Texas, and also sold timber and pecans. He diversified his interests with banking, oil, and real estate investments. Through their Yellow House Land Company, he and his brother, David Cleveland Reed, purchased the Yellow House Ranch west of Lubbock. This was originally the southern division of the famous XIT Ranch, the largest—more than 3 million acres—single cow operation in the Old West. The Reed brothers subdivided more than 250,000 acres of their holdings into 177-acre plots they sold to farmers between about 1923 and 1942. This subdivision was instrumental to cultivating cotton in west Texas. The

⁸ Austin History Center, David Cleveland Reed, Vertical File (Austin: Austin History Center, n.d.); Roy Sylvan Dunn, "Malcolm Hiram Reed" (*The Handbook of Texas Online*, 2001).

⁹ Dunn (2001); U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Burnet County, Texas, manuscript population schedule (Heritage Quest™ Online, subscription database, 1900); U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Travis County, Texas, manuscript population schedule (Heritage Quest™ Online, subscription database, 1910).

¹⁰ Dunn (2001).

company's estimated profit from the deal was more than \$10 million.¹¹

Reed's involvement with cotton production and marketing secured him influential positions. He served as president of the Texas Cotton Association and the New Orleans Cotton Exchange. Socially, Reed was a Mason and belonged to the York and Scottish Rites. He held membership in the Austin Rotary Club, and served as president of the Austin Country Club and Austin Chamber of Commerce.¹²

In 1936, Reed divorced his wife and married Roberta Farish Purvis. Known as Bobbie by friends, she was the college roommate of Reed's daughter and 40 years his junior. She was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1914, to Walter Moody and Lucy Burford Purvis. Her father held a number of jobs including lawyer, itinerant salesman of law books, and U.S. Army officer. His work moved the family to Arkansas, Kentucky, and Washington, D.C. Lucy Burford Purvis filed for divorce at a time when such action was unusual. She supported their three young children by selling encyclopedias door to door. They eventually settled in Dallas, where Roberta Purvis attended Highland Park High School. She was a good student, studied ballet, and excelled at track and field athletics. In 1932, she arrived in Austin to attend the University of Texas. She continued to study ballet, played polo, and served as president of Zeta Tau Alpha sorority. With her attractive appearance and personality, she never lacked suitors.¹³

Reed's daughter introduced her college roommate, Roberta Purvis, to her father. After Purvis graduated with a liberal arts degree, Reed left his wife of 40 years to marry the 21-year old.¹⁴ The bride commented, "He was much older...it was almost ridiculous." The newly married Reeds decided to escape local gossip and took an extended, globe-trotting honeymoon. On their honeymoon, the newlyweds purchased antiques, furniture, rugs, and art for their new home.

Before their departure, Reed had purchased lots 8-12 and 19-22 out of Block D, Monte Vista Addition, from J. T. Bowman.¹⁵ The Monte Vista Real Estate Company had platted the Monte Vista subdivision in 1926 with curved streets and private lots on the mildly hilly terrain just east of the Colorado River. Extant architectural styles in the neighborhood are eclectic and include Spanish, Classical, and Tudor Revivals, and later-constructed, more-modernistic designs.¹⁶

¹¹ Dunn (2001); David B. Gracy, "Yellow House Ranch" (*The Handbook of Texas Online*, 2002).

¹² *Austin American-Statesman*, Malcolm H. Reed, obituary (*Austin American-Statesman*, December 12, 1945); Dunn (2001).

¹³ Dunn (2001); Michele Stanush, "Sculpting Austin: Over the Years, Visionary Civic Leader Bobbie Crenshaw Rallied for Beauty" (*Austin American-Statesman*, June 2, 1996).

¹⁴ Stanley Dick, "Civic Pioneer Roberta Crenshaw Dies at 90: Parks Activist Fought to Keep Town Lake Serene" (*Austin American-Statesman*, February 9, 2005).

¹⁵ Stanush (1996); Travis County Deed Records, Vol. 549, p. 493 (Austin: Travis County Clerk, 1936).

¹⁶ Austin History Center, Monte Vista, Building File (Austin: Austin History Center, n.d.); Kirby Keahey and Allen McCree, eds., *Austin and Its Architecture*, (Austin: American Institute of Architects, Austin Chapter, and Women's Architectural League of Austin, 1976).

The Reeds commissioned architects David C. Baer and William "Bill" E. Bergman to build an English Tudor Revival house on the small estate in the tony West Austin neighborhood.¹⁷ Likely influenced by her mother's preference for English architecture, Roberta Reed admired true English Tudor houses and chose the style for their new home. She recalled that her mother's idea of heaven was to visit the castles of England.¹⁸ The Reeds instructed Baer and Bergman to first complete a smaller, wood-frame dwelling until the main house was ready. It is unknown if the Reeds corresponded with the architects while they were abroad or if they had a local supervisor monitor construction activity. His brother, David Cleveland Reed, lived in Austin and may have watched over the construction on their behalf. Baer and Bergman completed Reed Hall in 1937.¹⁹

Little is known of Bergman, except that he and Baer likely met at the University of Texas. Born in Holt County, Missouri, in 1904, Baer attended the University of Colorado Art College and architectural programs at the University of Minnesota and, between 1930 and 1935, the University of Texas. He was a draftsman for H. F. Kuehne's Austin architecture firm in 1935. By 1936, Baer and Bergman worked from the same West 24th Street address in Austin and the Reeds had commissioned the relatively inexperienced team to design their home.²⁰

Baer registered as an architect in Texas in 1937, and as an engineer in 1941. He worked in Austin until 1942, but Reed Hall is his only known local residential work. He moved to Houston where he planned several projects for the Texas State Highway Department—offices for the agency's Houston Urban Expressways, and for their districts in Houston, Atlanta, and Yoakum. Commercial buildings Baer designed were the Pasadena Savings Bank and office building and the International Business Machines building in Houston. He designed a modernistic house in San Antonio's Monte Vista neighborhood in the 1950s. In Houston, Baer partnered with Charles S. Chase, to form Baer and Chase, Architects and Engineers, but they parted ways in 1953. Baer won the prestigious American Institute of Architect's Edward C. Kemper Award in 1957.²¹

Less is known about Bergman's career after he left Austin in 1938. He worked in New Orleans for the firm of Favrot, Reed, Mathes and Bergman. The firm designed numerous buildings in the Crescent City including the New Orleans Public Library, City Hall, and Rivergate.²²

¹⁷ Stanush (1996).

¹⁸ Stanush (1996).

¹⁹ Sue Brandt McBee, "Reed Hall: On the Brink of Change" (*Austin Homes and Gardens*, May 1980).

²⁰ Morrison & Fourmy, *Austin City Directory* (Houston: Morrison & Fourmy's Directory Company, 1930–1939); *Texas Architect*, "Houston Architect Receives Coveted AIA Award," (*Texas Architect*, vol. 7, no. 11, February 1957).

²¹ Morrison & Fourmy (1939–1942); *Texas Architect* (1957).

²² Nathaniel Curtis, "The Rivergate: A 20th Century Masterpiece Destroyed by Louisiana's Gambling Blitz" (*Tulane University*, 2000); Morrison & Fourmy (1939–1942); New Orleans Public Library, "A History

The Reed estate originally comprised approximately 10 acres. Reed Hall was set so far back from Bowman Avenue, its chief access road, that it was closer to the next neighborhood street, Greenlee Drive, and that to the west, Pecos Street. Lush landscaping further concealed the house from each of these streets. A fence of stone and iron protected the property, and the main entrance was a half-hidden gate. A concrete and pea gravel lane bypassed two ponds and meandered through trees and shrubs and before meeting a circular drive in a cleared area in front of Reed Hall. Lawn and wooded areas created a park-like setting. From the stone terrace at the rear of the house, Lake Austin and Mount Bonnell were visible. A covered carport connected the main house to a two-story garage and caretaker's house that, in modest ways, echoed the Tudor Revival design of Reed Hall. A greenhouse, largely obscured behind the carport, connected Reed Hall to a small, one-story house that served as a servant's quarters. A stone path led from the main house to a swimming pool with a limestone bathhouse. A stable sheltered horses the Reeds rode along the estate's bridle paths. A one-story frame garage was near the rear of the property. Over the years, landscape features were added, including a stone sculpture, limestone garden area, rock fountain, greenhouse, hothouse, tree house, and stone patio.²³

Reed Hall's interior originally continued the Tudor Revival design theme. The living room had soaring, vaulted ceilings with large exposed support timbers, an immense stone fireplace, and stylized arched windows that looked onto the stone terrace. Massive English furniture dominated most rooms, but Asian accents fostered internationalism. Renowned Austin craftsman Fortunat Weigl designed the ironwork throughout the house. The second floor had four bedrooms, three bathrooms, and a nursery, the latter of which was converted to a studio.²⁴

The Reed's extended honeymoon did not prevent gossip upon their return to Austin, and local society shunned the couple. Roberta Reed tried to demonstrate herself worthy during this chilly period. She reminisced, "I must have had some feelings of necessity to justify my first marriage by proving I was a good citizen."²⁵ One of her first forays into civic responsibility was to purchase a few acres of Taylor's Slough, in the Monte Vista neighborhood, for a park. "I purchased the land for Reed Park and donated it to the city in hopes other property owners would follow suit and there would be a hike and bike trail from Casis School to Lake Austin." No one followed her lead, but Reed Park remains in use.²⁶

Reed's brother and his wife owned the tract directly to the east. There David Cleveland and Laura Moses Reed built a classically inspired dwelling at 3000

of the Main Library" (available from <http://nutrias.org/~nopl/mainhist.htm>).

²³ Austin History Center, Reed Hall, Building File (Austin: Austin History Center, n.d.); McBee (1980); Ryan Street & Associates, Inc., Tarry Hill Site Plan and Blueprints (Austin: Ryan Street & Associates, Inc., 2007).

²⁴ McBee (1980).

²⁵ Stanush (1996).

²⁶ McBee (1980); Sally Shipman, "Reed Hall Sold," (*Austin American-Statesman*, October 4, 1979).

Bowman Avenue in 1941, although their primary residence was at 1410 Rio Grande Street. He died tragically in 1948 airplane crash. His widow sold their West Austin property in 1956 to an Episcopalian congregation and it was used as a conference center. By 1968, the church had sold the property and a newly formed and very exclusive private club, Tarry House, has occupied the house and land since.²⁷

Perhaps new construction next door in 1941 inspired the Reeds to enlarge their home. In the 1940s, they added an east wing with a den to the southwest side of the house. Although Roberta Reed designed the room, family friend E. B. Sneed supervised construction. Sneed salvaged old logging chains from a ditch in New Orleans to support the room's unusual cantilevered stairway. Crafted from pecky cypress logs found at Lake Travis, the den's ceiling and doors were intentionally informal.²⁸ Sadly, they did not enjoy use of the new space for long—Malcolm Reed died of a heart attack in 1945 at the age of 69, leaving Roberta Reed with their two young daughters, Lucy and Roberta.

Two years later, she married prominent Austin attorney James Fagan Dickson Jr. Dickson, born in Howell, Kentucky, in 1904, attended Harvard Law School. He had passed the bar in Kentucky, and visited San Antonio in 1929 with cousins. He accepted a job at Hicks, Dickson, Bobbitt and Lange, joined the San Antonio Bar, and served as its president from 1939 to 1940.²⁹ In 1941, Dickson was elected to the 47th Texas House of Representatives.³⁰ He and his first wife, Mary, resided in Austin on Sharon Lane.³¹ He served as an assistant attorney general to Gerald C. Mann and Grover Sellers, and then went into a private practice. Dickson ran for state Supreme Court in 1950, but lost by a narrow margin. Active in the Democratic Party, he corresponded with presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter, and Democratic leaders J. W. Fulbright, J. J. Pickle, and Strom Thurmond. An opponent of the Vietnam War, Dickson authored two works on the subject. Although a close friend of President Lyndon Johnson, Dickson ran for Congress as a peace candidate in 1968 with the slogan "Bring Lyndon Home."³²

The Dicksons renovated their Bowman Avenue home in 1950. The Austin architectural firm Jessen, Jessen, Millhouse, and Greeven designed a remodeled kitchen and two bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor. In 1951, Sneed

²⁷ Austin History Center, Tarry House, Building File (Austin: Austin History Center, n.d.); Shipman (1979).

²⁸ McBee (1980).

²⁹ San Antonio Bar Association, "Past President's Messages" (*San Antonio Bar Association*, 2007); *Texas Bar Journal*, "Fagan Dickson" (*Texas Bar Journal*, February 1978).

³⁰ Legislative Reference Library of Texas, "Members and Leaders of the Texas Legislature" (available from <http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/legis/members/roster.cfm?leg=47>).

³¹ Morrison & Fourmy (1947); U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Bexar County, Texas, manuscript population schedule (Heritage QuestTM Online, subscription database, 1930).

³² Austin History Center, [James] Fagan Dickson [Jr.], Vertical File (Austin: Austin History Center, n.d.).

applied new stucco and stone-veneer façade to portions of the house for \$15,000.³³ In 1955, Roberta Reed Dickson subdivided the property and sold some portions of the lots that faced Greenlee Drive and Pecos Street.³⁴

Because of their connections to politics in Texas, the Dicksons held many parties and fundraisers at Reed Hall. The couple entertained high-profile politicians, and held wedding receptions for her daughters, Lucy Reed Hibberd and Roberta Reed Burns, on the property.³⁵

Roberta Reed Dickson was a well-connected and respected West Austinite by mid-century, when she became involved in local civic causes. Traveling to cities with planned gardens, greenbelts, and tree-shaded parkways inspired her to note her own growing city was on the verge of destroying that which made it special. As Austin's population increased, she worried about erosion of natural springs and urban creeks relegated to serving as drainage ditches. After developers threatened Town Lake, now known as Lady Bird Lake, with a Disney-like theme park, she rallied to preserve the lake and greenbelt, including a ban on motor boats. She was appointed to the city's Parks Board, a relatively powerless entity, in 1952. Still, she successfully pressured the city to split a parks and recreation department from the Public Works Department, and laid groundwork for beautification of Town Lake. She had a flagstone path laid near the Congress Avenue Bridge to the lake shore to jumpstart a hesitant City of Austin. She paid for planting almost 400 shrubs and trees. Lady Bird Johnson is often credited for preservation of the lake and popular hike-and-bike trail, but the former first lady noted that she got aboard a moving train that Roberta Reed Dickson started.³⁶ Dickson later donated 20 acres along the lake, a portion of her farm adjacent to the Austin County Club, as additional parkland.³⁷

With this successful experience, Dickson founded the city's first environmental group, the Austin Environmental Council, which lobbied for flood-plain control, dedication of greenbelt space, and monitoring precarious ecological conditions at Barton Springs. She was instrumental in convincing a state engineer to design the pedestrian bridge under Loop 1 that connects the hike-and-bike trail over Town Lake, and the bridge was named to honor her.³⁸ She remained on the Parks Board until 1970, and donated additional land—more than 30 acres—to the Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Park in east Austin.³⁹

³³ Austin History Center, 3200 Bowman Avenue, Building Permit (Austin: Austin History Center, 1951); Jessen, Jessen, Millhouse, and Greeven, Blue prints (Austin: Austin History Center, 1950).

³⁴ Travis County Deed Records, Vol. 7, p. 59 (Austin: Travis County Clerk, 1955).

³⁵ Shipman (1979).

³⁶ Dick (2005).

³⁷ McBee (1980); Stanush (1996).

³⁸ Stanush (1996).

³⁹ *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, "Roberta Crenshaw" (available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roberta_Crenshaw).

Her other accomplishments were varied, but many related to environmental interests. She was named trustee to the National Recreation and Parks Association and served as a director on the National Recreation Foundation. She was chosen as an honorary member of the Texas Society of Architects, Austin Chapter. Locally, she was a founding member of the Austin History Center and a leader in the Austin Heritage Society. During her marriage to Dickson, she served as president of Iraan Productions, Inc., and Dickson Properties, Inc., and vice-president of the Colorado River Development Company.⁴⁰

Hardships briefly derailed Roberta Reed Dickson's civic work in the 1970s. She suffered with an aneurysm and, in 1974, a bitter divorce from Dickson. She married longtime friend, Charles Edward Crenshaw IV in 1975. Born in Andalusia, Alabama, he attended the University of Alabama and Baylor University on sports scholarships. Crenshaw served in the Navy during World War II and moved with his first wife, Pearl, to Austin, where he was an assistant attorney general to Price Daniel. After leaving that position, he opened a private law practice, and became a prominent local attorney. He and his wife, who died in 1974, were parents to three children, including professional golfer Ben Crenshaw.⁴¹

By the late 1970s, Roberta Reed Dickson Crenshaw had reinvigorated her commitment to improving the community, delving into historic preservation and the arts. She was involved in restoration of the Paramount Theatre, donating her 51 percent interest in the building and raising funds for its preservation. The Umlauf Sculpture Garden was one of her last projects. A longtime admirer of artist Charles Umlauf, she encouraged him to deed his home and art to the city for a museum and garden. When the City of Austin was hesitant to commit because of operational costs, she spearheaded the effort to raise \$1 million to endow the undertaking.⁴²

In September 1980, the Crenshaws sold Reed Hall to the Reed Hall Joint Venture, which family friends Jack R. and Joanne Crosby operated.⁴³ The Crenshaws remained at Reed Hall until their new home, a large brick hacienda-like house overlooking Lake Austin that local architect Leonard Lundgren designed, was complete.⁴⁴

Jack R. Crosby, born in Del Rio, Texas, in 1927, graduated from the University of Texas with a degree in business administration. He married Joanne Sharp and they moved to Del Rio in 1949. In 1966, the Crosbys returned to Austin. He has

⁴⁰ Austin History Center, Dickson (n.d.).

⁴¹ *Austin American-Statesman*, Charles Crenshaw, obituary" (*Austin American-Statesman*, July 13, 1999); Stanush (1996).

⁴² Stanush (1996).

⁴³ McBee (1980).

⁴⁴ Stanush (1996).

been on the forefront of business and technology since the 1950s. As one of the first private entities to receive a license from the Federal Communications Commission for transmitting television signals via microwave, Crosby has been involved in the cable business since its formative years. He was chief operating officer of Cinema Star Luxury and movie theater operator, and director of National Dentex, a health care and research company. Crosby founded and currently chairs the Rust Group, a private investment firm based in Austin. For the University of Texas, the Crosbys endowed a chair in the McCombs School of Business Administration and endowed the Arts in Communities program of the Department of Theatre and Dance. Joanne Crosby, alongside Roberta Reed Dickson Crenshaw, was active in development of the Austin Ballet and restoration of the Paramount Theater.⁴⁵

The Crosbys made extensive changes to Reed Hall. In 1982, they hired Watson Associates to draw plans for renovating the bathroom, kitchen, family room, and upstairs bedrooms. These renovations replaced the ca. 1950 kitchen and removed the cantilevered stairway from the family room. The four original upstairs bedrooms were reconfigured into three bedrooms and the bathrooms were updated.⁴⁶

In 2006, the Crosbys sold the property to Richard J. and Anne M. Smalling. Extensive study proved the home contaminated with mold and structurally deficient. After careful examination and determination, the Smallings decided to demolish the house and build a new dwelling. The many renovations detrimentally affected Reed Hall's integrity of materials, design, workmanship, and feeling to the degree that the property was considered ineligible for local landmark status. Reed Hall was demolished in October 2007.

PART II: Architectural Information

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Reed Hall was an excellent local example of a Tudor Revival estate. The main house exemplified Tudor Revival design with false half-timbering and stucco siding on the upper story, split-face stone veneer siding on the lower story, and a steeply pitched, complex-gable roof sheathed in clay tiles. Prominent Tudor Revival elements were two stone chimneys and a large, ornamental, front doorway. The interior, especially the living room, had decorative truss beams and a floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace that exuded

⁴⁵ *Austin Business Journal*, "Crosby Joins Board of Coach Connect" (*Austin Business Journal*, January 17, 2005); Jim Keller, "Development of Cable Television in Texas" (Denver: The Cable Center, Oral History Collection, 2002); The University of Texas at Austin, College of Fine Arts, Joanne Sharp Crosby Endowment to Support Arts in Communities in the Department of Theatre and Dance (available from http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/special_programs/outreach_programs/outreach_resources.cfm [accessed November 9, 2007]).

⁴⁶ Watson Associates, Tarry Hill, Site Plan and Blueprints (Austin: Watson Associates, 1982).

Tudor Revival ornamentation. Several outbuildings and landscape features on the estate also incorporated characteristic Tudor Revival design principles.

2. Condition of Fabric: Before demolition in October 2007, the house's exterior was in fair condition and needed various repairs. The interior was in poor condition and many walls had been removed in attempt to resolve mold and moisture problems. The absence of a vapor barrier or ventilation between the exterior siding and interior wallboard had culminated in extensive damage.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: Reed Hall had a two-story main block with an asymmetrical floor plan. Appended to the main block were a southwest wing, a ca. 1950 east wing, and a covered walkway connecting to a two-story garage and caretaker's cottage. The main block was about 98 feet long by 39 feet wide; the southwest wing was about 28 feet long by 16 feet wide.
2. Foundations: The foundation was a poured-in-place concrete slab.
3. Walls: The exterior walls were of balloon-frame construction. The exterior cladding was false half-timbering with stucco siding on the upper story and split-face stone veneer siding on the lower story.
4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and Doors: Five doors were on the south façade and six doors were on the north façade of the house. The primary entrance was centered on the frontispiece of the main block. The frontispiece had a carved stone surround with graduated arches forming a hood mold. Small tabs of cut stone in the surrounding split-face stone veneer imparted a quoin-like effect. The large door was of vertical-plank wood decorated with ornamental iron. The metal screen door also had ornamental iron that replicated the shape of ivy.

The remaining entrances on the south side had standard, commercially produced doors. Two doors on the first floor led to small rooms, one near a hall off the main entrance and the other between the kitchen and utility rooms. Two doors on the second floor, each with wood-frame screen doors, led to the master bedroom and a guest bedroom. Door hardware varied and included round door knobs, lock sets, and metal hinges.

Four identical sets of French doorways were on the north side of the ca. 1950 east wing. Each set of doorways had eight main panes, of which each individual door had four panes. Each pane was further subdivided by mullions filled with small pieces of glass.

Two identical sets of larger, if narrower, French doors were on the north side of the main block. Each set of doorways had 20 panes, of which each individual door had 10 panes. Each pane was further subdivided by mullions filled with small pieces of glass. Twelve-pane, arched transom windows were above these doorways.

- b. Windows, Window Frames, and Shutters: Numerous windows were on each façade. The 1936-1937 portion of the house had wood casement windows that measured 4 feet wide by 6 feet tall. The casement windows had a vertically hung sash and opened outwards with 20 individual panes per window. Mesh screens were added later, but several were missing before demolition took place.

The 1936-1937 portion of the house also had several decorative windows. Common to Tudor Revival design, windows with diamond-shaped leaded panes that flanked the main entrance were about 2 feet wide by 6 feet tall. A three-bay window in the dining room had similarly patterned panes and was about 11 feet wide by 6 feet tall. A large, central-arched window provided light to the living room. The elliptical arch of this window had a half ellipse from the center of the springing line. This window was about 9 feet wide by 11 feet tall.

The most unusual window was that for the second-floor storage room. It was a small, wood casement window with four panes in the shape of a parallelogram. Its angle corresponded with the 35-degree slope of the ceiling. It had a vertically hung sash that opened outwards.

Windows on the ca. 1950 wing mimicked those that were original, but had slightly different dimensions. These wood casement windows had a vertically hung sash that opened outward. They measured 3 feet wide by 5 feet tall. In the 1980s, a bay window added to the second floor of the ca. 1950 wing had three panes of stained glass.

5. Roof:

- a. Shape, Covering: Flat-profile clay tiles sheathed the steeply pitched side-gable roof, which had two cross gables and one cross-hip gable on the south façade and two cross gables on the north façade. The front façade's off-set main bay had a dominant front-facing gable. The cross-gable ridges intersected the principal roof at the same point as the main gable ridge. The cross-hip gable extended outward over a projecting bay.
- b. Chimneys: An interior chimney was on the southern slope of the main block's side-gable roof. An exterior, gable-end chimney was on the ca. 1950 east wing. Both chimneys were constructed of the same split-face stone veneer as the lower story of the house.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. Main Floor: The main floor of Reed Hall was irregularly shaped and provided, mostly, public and service spaces. The main entrance opened into an asymmetrical foyer with a 9-foot-tall ceiling. Adjoining were a half bathroom, hall and antechamber, living room, and study. The foyer also adjoined with the main staircase to the second floor.

The aforementioned study led to the main hall, which, in turn, led to a guest bedroom, small clothes closet, linen closet, and bathroom that comprised the southwest wing. This wing projected at a 15-degree angle to the main block. The wing was about 28 feet long and 16 feet wide, with a 7-foot-wide bay window that projected almost 2 feet out from the exterior façade. The guest bedroom ceiling was 9 feet tall.

The focal point of the house was the spacious, two-story-tall living room, which measured about 31 feet by 23 feet. The grandest room of the house—it was a place for formal social interaction. Its ornate fireplace was more than 6 feet wide and extended the entire height of the 15-foot-tall room. Ornate wood truss beams in the ceiling and a second-floor balcony that overlooked the room added to its grandeur.⁴⁷

A formal dining room was next to the living room, with the kitchen and breakfast room adjacent. The dining room was about 16 feet by 10 feet with a 9-foot-tall ceiling. The L-shaped kitchen had a pantry and mechanical room. The slender breakfast room, about 16 feet by 6 feet, projected northward. With a 9-foot-tall ceiling, the breakfast room had a north projecting bay, about 16 feet by 2 feet, with French doors.

A bar connected the breakfast and family rooms. The bar was about 4 feet by 6 feet, but the ceiling was a few inches lower than the 9-foot-tall ceilings elsewhere in the house. A marble bar was on the south wall.

Easternmost on this floor was the family room, which provided more-informal public space for socializing. The room, including the depth of the fireplace, was 28 feet by 15 feet with a 9-foot-tall ceiling. Like the breakfast room, it had a northward projecting bay measuring about 24 feet by 2 feet, with French doors. On the east wall were built-in cabinets that dated to the 1980s remodeling.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ The balcony opening was still present before demolition of the house. However, the actual wood balcony had already been removed.

⁴⁸ Watson Associates, Blue prints. Austin, 1982.

The remaining rooms were another hall and a utility room. This 6-foot-long by 3-foot-wide hall connected the kitchen with the family room, and had an exterior doorway. The utility room was an irregular-shaped polygon that was 8 feet wide at its most ample points. Both rooms had two of the lowest ceilings in the house at only 7 feet tall.

- b. Second Floor: The second floor was smaller than the main floor with overall measurements of about 66 feet by 38 feet. From the main stairway, a 5-foot-wide by 6-foot-long hall led to an office and a storage room. The office, positioned over the main floor foyer, measured about 20 feet by 8 feet with a 9-foot-tall ceiling. The irregularly shaped storage room was about 18 feet long, and was often used for stowing luggage. The 7-foot-tall ceiling slanted with the roof's slope.

This hall also led to the balcony that was about 6 feet by 8 feet. The arched balcony opening overlooked the two-story-tall living room. This balcony was removed before documentation of the building began. The balcony led to a walk-in closet and a hall. This hall linked the balcony with the master bedroom and bathroom. The master bathroom, about 6 feet by 7 feet, was renovated in the 1980s with black granite tile floors and walls. The master bedroom, the largest bedroom in the house, was about 12 feet by 15 feet and had a 9-foot-tall ceiling. The north wall of the master bedroom had a 6-foot-wide opening to a sitting room and closet. A doorway at the southwest corner opened onto a balcony.

The remainder of the second floor was divided into two bedrooms, each with a corresponding bathroom, and another hall. One bedroom measured about 8 feet by 14 feet and the other measured about 9 feet by 18 feet, each with 9-foot-tall ceilings. The bathrooms were renovated in the 1980s. One of these bathrooms had two separate spaces, an area with the toilet and a sink and another for a sunken bath tub. A projecting bay by the bath tub, part of the 1980s renovation, had three stained-glass windows.

2. Stairways:

- a. Main Stairway: The base of the main stairway was in the foyer, beside the main entrance. It was an open-string, dog-leg staircase with two flights of stairs at a right angle to each other, and a half landing. The risers, treads, and post-to-post handrail were oak. At the base of the handrail was a carved newel cap in the shape of a pinecone. The balusters were black iron fashioned in a scroll pattern.
- b. Rear Stairway: The base of the rear stairway was in the family room. It had a quarter-turn with landing. The risers and treads were oak. The single balustrade had continuous iron handrail and balusters.

3. Flooring: Original tongue-and-groove oak floorboards were in the first floor foyer, study, guest bedroom, living room, and dining room, and the second floor balcony, storage room, bedrooms, and office. The 1980s renovation placed oak parquet flooring in the family room, kitchen, and breakfast room on the first floor. The bathroom floors were replaced during the same renovation with ceramic tile in one, marble tile in another, and granite tile in the master bathroom.
4. Wall and Ceilings Finish: Many interior walls had been removed because of mold and moisture problems. The absence of a vapor barrier or ventilation between the exterior siding and interior wallboard had culminated in extensive damage. The original walls and ceilings were sheet rock over wood studs. All of the walls and ceilings had been painted or wallpapered over time. Wallpaper borders remained in each bedroom and the study and rear stairway had wallpaper.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and Doors: Four-panel wood doors were installed throughout the house's interior. Before demolition, the doors were in good condition with round or oval knobs. Most of the doors were approximately 6 feet tall by 3 feet wide.
6. Decorative Features: Few decorative features from the original house remained. Most of the interior was extensively renovated in the 1980s. Original elements were removed and contemporaneously popular decorations were added. The remaining original decorative features included the front door, main stairway, fireplace, and ornate truss beams.

The front door was centered on the frontispiece of the main block. The frontispiece had a carved stone surround with graduated arches forming a hood mold. Above the hood mold were cut-stone scroll work and a crest with a stylized eagle. Small tabs of cut stone in the surrounding split-face stone veneer imparted a decorative quoin-like effect. The large door was of vertical-plank wood decorated with ornamental iron. The metal screen door also had ornamental iron that replicated the shape of ivy.

At the base of the main stairwell's handrail was a carved newel cap shaped like a pinecone. The balusters were black iron fashioned in a scroll pattern.

The ornate fireplace in the living room was more than 6 feet wide and extended the entire 15-foot height of the room. Decorative oak leaves were carved into the mantle. Ornate wood truss beams in the ceiling had six-leaf flowers carved into their apexes.

D. Site:

1. **Historical Landscape Design:** The Reed estate originally comprised approximately 10 acres. Historically, the extensive acreage surrounding Reed Hall was heavily wooded. Reed Hall was set so far back from Bowman Avenue, its chief access road, that it was closer to the next neighborhood street to the north, Greenlee Drive, and that to the west, Pecos Street. Lush landscaping further concealed the house from each of these streets. A fence of stone and wrought iron protected the property, and the main entrance was a half-hidden gate. A concrete and pea gravel lane bypassed two ponds and meandered through trees and shrubs and before meeting a circular drive in a cleared area in front of Reed Hall. Lawn and wooded areas created a park-like setting. Ornamental trees and flowerbeds surrounded the house. From the stone terrace at the rear of the house, Lake Austin and Mount Bonnell were visible.
2. **Outbuildings and Features:** Seven outbuildings were extant on the estate in October 2007. Constructed about the same time as the main house were a two-story garage and caretaker's house, one-story servant's quarters, one-story garage, and swimming pool with limestone bathhouse. By the late twentieth century a tree house, hothouse, and greenhouse had been added.

A covered carport connected the main house to a two-story garage and caretaker's house that modestly echoed the Tudor Revival design of Reed Hall. Resting on a concrete-slab foundation, the building was of balloon-frame construction with stucco and stone veneer exterior siding. The exterior cladding was false half-timbering with stucco siding on the upper story and split-face stone veneer siding on the lower story. The steeply pitched roof was sheathed with flat-profile clay tiles. The one-story servant's quarters, again echoing Tudor Revival design, had false half-timbering, Masonite siding, and an asbestos-tile roof.

The one-story garage at the rear of the property was of balloon-frame construction with clapboard siding and an asbestos-tile roof capped by a small cupola. The main façade had a single door entrance next to a wide entrance that accommodated one automobile.

A stone path led from the main house to a swimming pool with a limestone bathhouse. A intentional gap between the walls and the roof support beams left the bathhouse open to air circulation. It had two recessed changing areas and a bar.

The tree house, hothouse, and greenhouse, had been added by the late twentieth century. The wood tree house was southwest of Reed Hall. The steel and glass hothouse interior had a stone fountain and wood shelves for housing plants. The greenhouse was a fiberglass building.

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PART IV: Project Information

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